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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 15559

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD, EFIN, EAGR, MG, UR, COMECON, PFOR, UR

SUBJECT: VISIT TO MONGOLIA: HIGHLIGHTS

REF: MOSCOW A-355, OCTOBER 4, 1975

1. SUMMARY. TWO MOSCOW EMBOFFS BECAME THE FIRST
U.S. DIPLOMATS IN NEARLY A DECADE TO VISIT (I.E. NOT MERELY TO
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TRANSIT) THE MONGOLIAN PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC. AS TOURISTS THEY DID

NOT INITIATE ANY CONTACT WITH MONGOLIAN OFFICIALS, BUT FOUND THOSE WHOM THEY MET INFORMALLY, AS WELL AS THE FOREIGN DIPLOMATS IN ULAN BATOR, INTERESTED IN THE QUESTION OF U.S. - MPR DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND EXPANSION OF TRADE. EMBOFFS VISITED NUMEROUS PLACES OF INTEREST IN AND NEAR ULAN BATOR, AS WELL AS A FACTORY AND A STATE FARM NEAR THE NEW INDUSTRIAL CITY OF DARKHAN.

2. PHYSICALLY, MONGOLIA RESEMBLES THE AMERICAN WEST OF A CENTURY OR MORE AGO. BUT THE BUILDERS IN THIS BROAD AND SPARSELY-POPULATED LAND ARE THE SOVIETS AND THEIR EAST EUROPEAN COLLEAGUES RATHER THAN THE ANGLO-SAXONS AND OTHER WEST EUROPEAN SETTLERS. MOST MONGOLIANS STILL LIVE IN YURTS -- THE TRADITIONAL TENT-LIKE STRUCTURE EASILY TRANSPORTED BY A NOMADIC HERDSMAN ON HIS SMALL HORSE. BUT THE PATTERN IN CHANGING RAPIDLY. MORE AND MORE OF MONGOLIA'S ECONOMY IS COMING TO CONSIST OF INDUSTRY, EXPLOITATION OF MINERAL RESOURCES AND EXTENSIVE AGRICULTURE. ALL OF THESE MEAN LESS WANDERING AND MORE SETTLING BY THE MONGOLIANS AS TIME GOES ON. WITH SOME LUCK THEY WILL ESCAPE THE FATE OF THE AMERICAN INDIANS IN THEIR NATIVE LAND, BUT THE PROCESS OF "MODERNIZATION," SOVIET-STYLE, IS ALREADY MAKING ITS MARK.

3. THE OVERWHELMING FACT ABOUT THE COUNTRY IS THE SOVIET/EAST EUROPEAN PRESENCE, WHICH EXTENDS TO ALL LEVELS AND ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE. THE COUNTRY IS A SOVIET COLONY TO A FAR GREATER EXTENT THAN ANY OF THOSE IN EASTERN EUROPE, AND RESEMBLES IN MANY WAYS THE SOVIET PROVINCES OF CENTRAL ASIA. ALL COMMUNICATION LINKS RUN NORTH AND WEST, NOT SOUTH, AND THEY CARRY TWO-WAY TRAFFIC. END SUMMARY.

4. TWO MOSCOW EMBOFFS (SMITH/ECONOMIC, AND JOHNSON/POLITICAL) VISITED THE MPR OCTOBER 17-22 AS TOURISTS. THEY TRAVELLED ON DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS AND WERE GIVEN MONGOLIAN DIPLOMATIC VISAS, BUT WERE OTHERWISE TREATED AS UNOFFICIAL VISITORS. UPON ARRIVAL IN ULAN BATOR THEY WERE MET BY A GUIDE FROM THE MONGOLIAN TRAVEL SERVICE WHO ACCOMPANIED THEM NEARLY ALL OF THE TIME THEY WERE IN THE COUNTRY.

5. THE ONE AND ONE-HALF HOUR FLIGHT FROM IRKUTSK HEADED
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SOUTHEAST, CROSSING THE BLUE DEPTHS OF LAKE BAIKAL AND THE SNOWY PEAKS BEYOND, THEN CONTINUING INTO MONGOLIA. THE BORDER WAS MARKED AS CLEARLY AS ON A MAP BY THE CHANGES IN SURFACE VEGETATION AND TERRAIN, FROM GREEN TO BROWN AND FROM RUGGED MOUNTAINS TO UNDULATING HILLS, LEVELLING OUT TO FLAT BARREN EXPANSES IN SOME PLACES. THE CLOSEST NORTH AMERICAN COMPARISON WOULD BE PARTS OF EASTERN MONTANA, WYOMING AND UTAH -- MARLBORO COUNTRY.

6. THE CITY OF ULAN BATOR (ALTITUDE ABOUT 4,000 FEET) STRETCHES FOR NEARLY TWENTY KILOMETERS ALONG A BROAD EAST-WEST VALLEY WHICH IS DISSECTED BY THE MAIN RAIL LINE BETWEEN MOSCOW AND PEKING. THE CITY IS ABOUT FIVE KILOMETERS WIDE AT ITS WIDEST. ARRIVING BY PLANE OR TRAIN, ONE ENTERS THE CITY FROM THE WEST THROUGH A NEW INDUSTRIAL AREA DOMINATED BY TWO LARGE THERMAL POWER STATIONS WHICH CAST CLOUDS OF BLACK SMOKE INTO THE BRILLIANTLY CRYSTALLINE AIR OVER THE CITY. IN ADDITION TO THESE AND OTHER FACTORIES, THE "MODERN" SECTOR OF THE CITY CONSISTS OF MANY SOVIET-STYLE APARTMENT BUILDINGS AND A NUMBER OF SOVIET-STYLE OFFICIAL BUILDINGS AROUND A WIDE CENTRAL SQUARE. AMONG THESE BUILDINGS ARE THE OPERA-BALLET THEATER, THE POST AND TELEGRAPH OFFICE, A MASSIVE PARLIAMENT BUILDING AND A RED-MARBLE MAUSOLEUM FOR THE TWO HEROES OF THE MONGOLIAN "REVOLUTION," SUKHBATOR AND CHOIBALSAN. NESTLED NEAR THE NEW BUILDINGS AND STRETCHING INTO THE HILLS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE VALLEY ARE LARGE COMPOUNDS OF YURTS, THE TRADITIONAL WHITE MONGOLIAN CIRCULAR TENTS WHICH CAN EASILY BE TRANSPORTED AS NOMADIC LIFE REQUIRES. MOST OF THE YURT COMPOUNDS IN ULAN BATOR, HOWEVER, SEEM FAIRLY PERMANENT, WITH ELECTRIC LINES AND MARKED PATHWAYS LINKING THE COMPOUNDS TO THE CITY. AN ESTIMATED 60-70 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION OF ULAN BATOR, GIVEN AS 340,000, LIVES IN YURTS, AND NEARLY ALL MONGOLIANS LIVE THAT WAY ELSEWHERE.

7. THE GUIDE AND SEVERAL OF THE MONGOLIAN GUESTS AT A BRITISH EM ASSY RECEPTION ON OCTOBER 20 INQUIRED ABOUT THE ABSENCE OF U.S.- MPR DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. EMBOFFS REPLIED THAT THEY WERE NOT PRIVY TO THE EXCHANGES TO DATE, BUT UNDERSTOOD THAT WASHINGTON WAS STILL AWAITING AREPLY TO ITS MOST RECEPT PROPOSALS SUBMITTED ONE AND ONE-HALF YEARS AGO. THE MONGOLIANS, NONE OF WHOM WERE FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, FOUND IT STRANGE THAT MONGOLIA HAD NOT REPLIED, BUT ONE SPOKE OF THE NEED TO CONFIDENTIAL

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ESTABLISH A "CLIMATE OF TRUST" WHEN THE TWO COUNTRIES HAVE HAD SO LITTLE CONTACT HISTORICALLY. HE WAS PROFESSOR NAMSARAIN SODNOM, RECTOR OF ULAN BATOR UNIVERSITY AND A NUCLEAR PJYSICIST BY TRAINING. HE SPEAKS GOOD ENGLISH AND BETTER RUSSIAN, AND WAS VERY FAVORABLY IMPRESSED WITH THE U.S. ON A VISIT TO THE SUNY AT ALBANY A FEW YEARS AGO. HE OPENLY FAVORED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, AND LOOKED FORWARD TO MORE ACTIVE SCIENTIFIC, CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGES. HE SUGGESTED THAT PROFESSOR OWEN LATTIMORE, WHO IS KNOWN AS AN AMERICAN FRIEND OF MONGOLIA, WOULD BE A USEFUL CHANNEL FOR HELPING TO CREATE SUCH A CLIMATE OF TRUST. BRITISH AMBASSADOR PONSONBY ALSO OFFERED PRIVATELY TO BE OF ANY SERVICE HE COULD TO U.S.-MPR RELATIONS. HE WELCOMED THE PROSPECT OF AN AMERICAN MISSION TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF NON-COMMUNIST RESIDENT EMBASSIES TO FOUR AND THE TOTAL IN ULAN BATOR TO EIGHTEEN. HE SAID THAT

IN HIS EXPERIENCE THE MONGOLIANS FIND IT EASIER NOT TO REPLY ON
DIFFICULT ISSUES THAN TO CONFRONT THEM. THEY THUS AVOID
REJECTING A PROPOSAL, BUT THE EFFECT IS TO REJECT IT ANYWAY.

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8. MONGOLIAN FOREIGN TRADE OFFICIALS AT THE BRITISH RECEPTION
SHOWED INTEREST IN EXPANDING TRADE WITH NON-COMMUNIST COUNTRIES
(SPECIFICALLY INCLUDING THE U.S.), WHICH NOW ACCOUNTS FOR LESS
THAN FIVE PERCENT OF THE MPR'S FOREIGN TRADE (ABOUT 94 PERCENT
IS WITH CEMA COUNTRIES, ABOUT 80 PERCENT WITH THE USSR ALONE).

BUT THE MONGOLIANS SHOWED UNCERTAINTY REGARDING HOW TO BRING ABOUT SUCH AN INCREASE, WHAT FIRST STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN. PROFESSOR SODNOM SAID THAT MONGOLIA HAD NOT DEVELOPED SUFFICIENT EXPERTISE OR EXPERIENCE IN MARKETING TO NON-COMMUNIST COUNTRIES, BUT THAT THE EXPANSION OF SUCH TRADE WOULD BE BOTH NATURAL AND DESIRABLE. HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT MONGOLIA'S LINKS TO CEMA WOULD INHIBIT THIS DEVELOPMENT, BUT WAS NOT CLEAR ABOUT THE PAY-BACK PROVISIONS FOR CEMA-AIDED PROJECTS. JAPANESE EMBOFF TAKUO KIDOKORO SAID THAT JAPAN HAS SEEN LITTLE EVIDENCE OF A SERIOUS MPR EFFORT TO INCREASE TRADE WITH JAPAN. THIS YEAR'S TARGET, HE SAID, IS FOR \$1 MILLION IN TWO-WAY TURNOVER, BUT THROUGH JULY ONLY 200,000 HAD ACTUALLY BEEN TRADED. THE MONGOLIANS ARE ACTIVELY SEEKING JAPANESE AID IN THE FORM OF INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS, BUT THUS FAR PROGRESS HAS BEEN SLOW.

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9. THE SOVIET/EAST EUROPEAN PRESENCE DOMINATES THE MODERN SECTORS OF MONGOLIAN LIFE AND IS GRADUALLY SHAPING IT TO MOSCOW'S PATTERN. BESIDES THE FACTORIES AND BUILDINGS NOTED ABOVE, SOVIET DOMINATION IS OBVIOUS IN A HOST OF OTHER WAYS: ALL FORMS OF TRANSPORT ARE OF SOVIET MANUFACTURE, FROM PLANES (AN-24S, AN-2S, HELICOPTERS) TO TRAINS (FOR LOCAL AS WELL AS INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC) TO MOTOR VEHICLES; ALL BUT A FEW OF THE TELEVISION PROGRAMS, INCLUDING THE MAIN EVENING NEWS, ARE BEAMED DIRECTLY FROM MOSCOW IN RUSSIAN VIA SATELLITE; RUSSIAN IS THE ONLY FOREIGN LANGUAGE TAUGHT BELOW THE COLLEGE LEVEL, AND IT IS COMPULSORY IN ALL SCHOOLS FROM THE FOURTH GRADE ON; MODERN MONGOLIAN IS WRITTEN IN CYRILLIC; MANY MORE BOOKS AND JOURNALS ARE AVAILABLE IN URSSIAN THAN IN MONGOLIAN. AS FOR NUMBERS, AMBASSADOR PONSONBY ESTIMATED THAT THE SOVIET COMMUNITY IN ULAN BATOR TOTALS 10-20,000 A MONGOLIAN OFFICIAL ESTIMATED THAT ABOUT 10,000 EAST EUROPEANS WERE CURRENTLY LIVING IN DARKHAN, A SOVIET EMBOFF IN ULAN BATOR SAID THAT THERE WERE OVER 3,000 SOVIETS AT ERDINET. ON A SMALLER SCALE, THE SOVIETS SEND IN HUNDREDS OF TEACHERS, GOVERNMENT ADVISORS, AND EVEN AGRICULTURAL WORKERS (SEE PARA 13 BELOW). IN ADDITION TO THESE CIVILIANS OF ALL TYPES, THE SOVIETS HAVE SEVERAL THOUSAND TROOPS IN MONGOLIA, MAINLY NEAR THE COUNTRY'S SOUTHERN BORDER WITH THE PRC. ON OCTOBER 18 EMBOFFS SAW A TRAINLOAD OF YOUNG SOVIET TROOPS, WITH A FEW MONGOLIANS, LEAVING ULAN BATOR FOR THE EAST GOBI REGION, NEAR THE CHINESE FRONTIER.

10. THE SOVIET INFLUX IS MOST EVIDENT IN THE CHANGING ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE COUNTRY. INDUSTRIAL PLANTS ARE BEING

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CONSTRUCTED, MINERALS PROBED AND EXPLOITED AND SEDENTARY FARMING EXPANDED AT THE COST OF NOMADIC GRAZING. EMBOFFS VISITED THE NEW INDUSTRIAL CITY OF DARKHAN, 220 KILOMETERS NORTH OF ULAN BATOR, WHERE A CEMENT PLANT, GRAIN AND MEAT PROCESSING PLANTS, A FACTORY FOR THE MANUFACTURE OF SHEEPSKIN COATS, COAL PROCESSING AND CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL PLANTS ARE ALL IN FULL OPERATION. THESE INSTALLATIONS WERE PROVIDED UNDER CREDITS AND GRANT AID FROM THE USSR, HUNGARY, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, POLAND AND BULGARIA, AND IT WAS APPARENT THAT SOME, AND IN CERTAIN CASES ALMOST ALL, OF THEIR PRODUCTION IS MORTGAGED FOREXPORT TO USSR AND THE EE CEMA COUNTRIES OVER A CONSIDERABLE PERIOD.

11. A MONGOLIAN TRADE OFFICIAL SAID THAT VISITS BY FOREIGNERS TO ERDENET COPPER AND MOLYBDENUM MINING COMPLEX WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNTIL 1976 OR 1977. THE ACCESS RAILWAY WAS COMPLETED EARLY IN OCTOBER AND EMBOFFS NOTED A PAVED HIGHWAY TO ERDENET BRANCHING OFF FROM ULAN BATOR-DARKHAN HIGHWAY JUST BELOW DARKHAN. THE DISTANCE WAS GIVEN AS 16 KILOMETERS FROM THE TURNOFF. A MODEL OF ERDENET MOUNTAIN IN AN ULAN BATOR MUSEUM INDICATES THAT IT CONTAINS ALMOST PURE COPPER ORE AFTER SHALLOW (THIRTEEN METERS) EARTH COVERING IS REMOVED.

12. EMBOFFS WERE TOLD THAT A MAJOR MULTILATERAL COMECON PROJECT OVER THE PERIOD 1976-80 WILL BE INTENSIVE SURVEY AND EXPLORATION FOR MONGOLIAN MINERAL AND FUEL RESOURCES, INCLUDING OIL. SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICIALS IN ULAN BATOR ALLEGED THAT NO SIGNIFICANT OIL DEPOSITS HAD BEEN LOCATED THUS FAR. PREVIOUS COMECON PROSPECTING IN MONGOLIA HAS BEEN ON A BILATERAL BASIS AND ON OCTOBER 18 EMBOFF TALKED WITH THREE HUNGARIAN GEOLOGISTS WHO HAD BEEN WORKING IN GOBI AREA FOR MORE THAN TWO YEARS.

13. EMBOFFS ALSO VISITED A STATE FARM NEAR DARKHAN, WHICH REPORTEDLY PRODUCED 32,500 TONS OF GRAIN THIS YEAR, ABOUT 30 PERCENT ABOVE ITS TARGET. THE FARM COVERED 29,000 HECTARES AND WAS ONE OF SEVERAL SEEN FROM THE AIR NORTH OF ULAN BATOR. FARMING IS EXTENSIVE RATHER THAN INTENSIVE, WITH RELATIVELY FEW WORKERS AND A FAIR NUMBER OF MACHINES. EMBOFFS TRAVELLED BACK TO MOSCOW WITH ABOUT 40 SOVIET AGRICULTURAL WORKERS -- "TECHNICIANS" E.G., AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY OPERATORS AND POSSIBLY COLLECTIVE FARM BRIGADE LEADERS-- WHO HAD BEEN WORKING IN MONGOLIA FOR THREE MONTHS "TO GET OUT THE GRAIN HARVEST." THEIR COMMENTS CONFIRMED
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REPORTS EMBOFFS HAD RECEIVED FROM MONGOLIAN SOURCES THAT MPR HAD BUMPER WHEAT HARVEST THIS YEAR AND WAS EXPORTING WHEAT TO USSR. THE TECHNICIANS SAID THE MONGOLIANS HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO HANDLE HARVESTING OF THE LARGE CROP BY THEMSELVES. ONE SAID THAT HE HAD WORKED ON A FARM NORTHEAST OF ULAN BATOR, ON WHICH

THREE SOVIET COMBINES HAD HARVESTED 7,000 HECTARES.

14. THE EFFECTS OF THESE CHANGES ARE DIFFICULT TO MEASURE, BUT THEY ARE INEXORABLE. THE PATTERNS OF LIFE IN MONGOLIA ARE MOVING AWAY FROM THE NOMADIC AND TOWARDS THE SETTLED. A BRITISH FUR TRADER IN ULAN BATOR SAID THAT BOTH THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF MONGOLIAN NATURAL FURS HAD DECLINED IN RECENT YEARS, IN LARGE PART, HE THOUGHT, BECAUSE FEWER MONGOLIANS WERE INTERESTED IN SPENDING TIME AND EFFORT IN THE WILDS TRAPPING ANIMALS.

15. THE COMPARISON WITH THE AMERICAN INDIANS IS EXTREME, TO BE SURE. BUT THE PROCESS OF SOVIETIZATION IS ALREADY WELL ADVANCED, MAKING MONGOLIA, IN PRACTICE IF NOT IN NAME, A SEVENTEENTH SOVIET REPUBLIC.
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